THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has not department or subordinate office under it. So far as the Ministry is concerned, there are 58 electronic bilingual typewriters.

Decision of OPEC to increase Crude Production

4985. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent decision of OPEC to increase crude production will reduce India's import bill;

(b) if so, whether due to the decision of the OPEC, Government propose to reduce the price of petroleum products in the country;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what would be the impact of the decision of the OPEC on our public sector oil Companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (c) OPEC members (excluding Iran) in their meeting held on 27.3.2000 agreed to increase the production of crude oil by 1.45 million barrels per day which has resulted in some fall in oil prices in international market. OPEC have, however, decided to review their decision in June, 2000. Currently, prices of oil in international market are volatile. The oil prices trend in the international market has an impact on our import bill and the domestic prices. There is no proposal to reduce prices of controlled petroleum products.

(d) The refinery margins depend on price differentials in the crude oil and product prices. Our oil companies, including the public sector oil companies, would bear the financial impact depending on the oil and prodcut price parity in the international market.

Marketing Rights to Private and Joint Sector Refineries

4986. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been actively considering to grant marketing rights to private and joint sector refineries in the country;

(b) if so, the likely benefits to Government by providing marketing rights to refineries;

(c) whether refineries in public sector would have any adverse effect on the decision of Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (d) Government, in November, 1997, decided to dismantle the Administered Pricing Mechanism in a phased manner. The said decision, inter-alia, includes the following:—

> "Investments in the refining sector will be encouraged by providing reasonable tariff protection and making marketing rights for transportation fuels viz MS, HSD and ATF conditional on owning and operating refineries with an investment of atleast Rs. 2000 crores or oil exploration and production companies producing atleast three million tonnes of crude oil annually."

Further, on 26.5.98, Government decided that the marketing of controlled petroleum products would continue to be regulated in accordance with the present regime until Administered Pricing Mechanism is fully dismantled.

No decision has been taken as yet for granting marketing rights to private and joint sector refineries.

Gas Connections under MP Quota in Villages

4987. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the residents of certain villages where there is not a Single Cooking Gas Agency find it impossible to get an LPG coupon from the Member of Parliament of their constituency as it requires a registeration receipts from the gas agency; and

(b) if so, what steps are taken to help such residents to avail LPG coupon from their respective MPs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) and (b) Under the extant guidelines, any person from a Member of Parliament's constituency desirous of getting a gas connection form MP's guota, can get himself registered with any nearest LPG distributor of Public Sector Oil Companies and avail LPG connection on basis of LPG coupon.